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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9844  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 5182  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4889  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 7711  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1426  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 3659  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1873  
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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1424  
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RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0756  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 005126

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/27/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [TH](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PRESSES THAI FOREIGN MINISTRY ON BURMA

REF: BANGKOK 5106 (PERMSEC UPDATES VIEW)

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Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The Ambassador called MFA Permanent Secretary Virasakdi Futrakul on September 27 to express concern about current RTG policy toward Burma. The Ambassador cited reports that Foreign Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram, in New York for the UNGA, had sought to discourage Prime Minister Surayud from making constructive public remarks on Burma. The Ambassador also expressed dismay that Thai MFA officials had indicated Nitya was not available to meet with Undersecretary Burns.

¶2. (C) Virasakdi said he was surprised by the perception that Nitya was unhelpful on Burma. (Note: Press reports have quoted Nitya as saying, "We all want to see peace." End Note.) Subsequently, Virasakdi called the Ambassador to say he had conveyed USG concerns to Nitya. Virasakdi then provided a copy of what he described as much-improved, tougher language that Nitya was prepared to use with ASEAN Foreign Ministers on September 27 (see below).

¶3. (C) Virasakdi confided to the Ambassador that he believed Surapong Jayanama, currently serving as Deputy Secretary General to the Prime Minister for Political Affairs, was likely responsible for propagating false reports that the MFA was watering down Surayud's position on Burma. Virasakdi said the MFA faithfully carried out Surayud's policies, but Surapong, whom he characterized as an inexperienced "Monday morning quarterback," advocated a harder line against the Burmese regime. Virasakdi, who formerly served as Ambassador to Burma, noted that Thailand and Burma had a relationship akin to that of the United States and Mexico (e.g., chaos in

Burma would have serious implications for Thais), and Burma also appeared to be a "Yugoslavia in waiting," a mix of ethnic and interest groups with separatist tendencies that needed to be restrained.

14. (C) The Ambassador also read to Virasakdi remarks by General Sonthi on Burma (septel), which appeared to have Sonthi expressing sympathy and support for the Burmese regime. Virasakdi admitted these remarks were "very unfortunate."

15. (C) Regarding Surayud, an audience member reported that the Prime Minister said at a September 26 Asia Society event: "Burma is a concern to all of us" and "using violence to crack down on monks should not be the way of life for Buddhists."

16. (C) Below is the text provided by the MFA with Nitya's draft talking points for his meeting with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on September 27. Virasakdi said Prime Minister Surayud would draw on these themes in his UNGA speech later the same day.

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BEGIN MFA TEXT  
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"Talking about Southeast Asia, my country, like many others, is gravely concerned about the latest developments in Myanmar and that the situation should not deteriorate. We support the good offices role of the United Nations Secretary-General on this issue and welcome the decision of the UNSG to dispatch Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari to the region.

"As a neighbor, sharing a land border of more than 2,400

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kilometres and currently hosting more than a million Myanmar citizens, we are closely monitoring the situation.

"Being a fellow ASEAN member country and fellow Buddhists, Thailand urges the Myanmar Government to exercise maximum restraint and call on all parties concerned to seek a peaceful solution and work towards democracy and national reconciliation."

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END MFA TEXT  
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17. (C) Comment: We have leaned on the MFA hard during the day and their rhetoric on Burma seems to be improving, although final decisions will rest with the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister in New York.

ENTWISTLE